ITA

GRONDONA, Edward L.
Zuniga, Eva L.

12

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Oakland Neighborhood History Project

We, Edward Grondona (narrator) and Sally Thomas (interviewer),

do hereby give to the Oakland Neighborhood History Project for such scholarly and educational uses as the Project Director shall determine the following tape-recorded interview(s) recorded on (date) August 14, 1981 as an unrestricted gift and transfer to the Camron-Stanford House Preservation Association legal title and all literary property rights including copyright. This gift does not preclude any use which we may want to make of the information in the recordings ourselves.

NARRATOR

Edward L Grondona
Signature of narrator

EDWARD L GRONDONA
Name of narrator

387 - JAYNE AV
Address

OAKLAND CALIF 94610

(dated)

INTERVIEWER

Sally Thomas
Signature of interviewer

Sally Thomas
Name of interviewer

2918 Benvenue #2
Address of interviewer

Berkeley 94705

(dated) August 14, 1981

Accepted for the Oakland Neighborhood History Project

by _____ _____
(Project Director) (Dated)

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We, ZUNINO (narrator) and Sally Thomas (interviewer),

do hereby give to the Oakland Neighborhood History Project for such scholarly and educational uses as the Project Director shall determine the following tape-recorded interview(s) recorded on (date) _____ as an unrestricted gift and transfer to the Camron-Stanford House Preservation Association legal title and all literary property rights including copyright. This gift does not preclude any use which we may want to make of the information in the recordings ourselves.

NARRATOR

Eva L Zunino
Signature of narrator

EVA L. ZUNINO
Name of narrator

307 JAYNE AVE
Address

OAKLAND CALIF 9460
(dated)

INTERVIEWER

Sally Thomas
Signature of interviewer

Name of interviewer

Address of interviewer

(dated)

Accepted for the Oakland Neighborhood History Project

by _____ (Project Director) _____ (Dated)

Edward Grondona
and Eva Zunino
West Oakland residents

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Oakland Neighborhood
History Project

General Topic of Interview West Oakland, Italians

Date August 14, 1981 Place 307 Jayne Avenue, Oakland Length

Narrator	Interviewer
Name EDWARD L GRONDONA	Name Sally Thomas
Address 307 JAYNE AVE OAKLAND CALIF #94610	Address 7918 Benvenue Apt #2 Berkeley, 94705
Name & address of relative, friend	Relationship to narrator [friend, neighbor, etc.]
Birthplace ALAMEDA CALIF	Length of acquaintance
Birthdate AUGUST 27th 1908	Occasion of interview
Occupation(s) WORKED FOR SOUTHERN PACIFIC	

Interview Data

Subjects covered, in approximate order, spelling out names of persons and places mentioned

Estimated Time on Tape	Contents

Use back of sheet if necessary

Donated Tapes Collection

Oakland Neighborhood
History Project

General Topic of Interview West Oakland, Italians

Date August 14, 1981 Place 307 Jayne Avenue, Oakland Length

Narrator	Interviewer
Name EVA P ZUNINO	Name Sally Thomas
Address 307 JAYNE AVE	Address 2918 Benvenue Apt #2
OAKLAND CALIF 94610	Berkeley 94705
Name & address of relative, friend	Relationship to narrator [friend, neighbor, etc.
CARL A GRONDONA	
MCKINLEY AVE	
Birthplace ALAMEDA CALIF	Length of acquaintance
Birthdate AUGUST 20 1898	Occasion of interview
Occupation(s) RETIRED P G+E Co	

Interview Data

Subjects covered, in approximate order, spelling out names of persons and places mentioned

Estimated Time on Tape	Contents

Use back of sheet if necessary

Oakland Neighborhood History Project

Interview with Eva Zunino and Edward Grondona

Date:

Interviewer: Sally Thomas

August 14, 1981 Eva Zunino and Edward Grondona

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

0-5 minutes	0-50 counter

ST Why don't you begin by telling me when your grandfather came over here from Italy.

Ek That was in the early 1850s. He came over here by ship. He worked his way over — South America (and whatnot) ____ and the other countries. The reason he came over here — his grandfather was blind, and he used to take him by the hand, and had to walk him. In (nobility) days had to take your hat off and bow to him. My great-grandfather would say, "Put a rock in your head, when you're leaving off your hat, throw the rock." He was about 13 years old, and he done it! So, from there, they had to sneak him out, get him out of Italy, into France, from France then he got on these boats, then he came around the horn to California. From then it was rough. He started in San Francisco, him and a German by the name of Zimmerman, and Kazo (sp?), They picked potatoes and whatnot and went out in the sanddunes (sp?) up there and grew potatoes and vegetables. They prospered. But then they sent down the vigilantes from the South (?) to get rid of all the Spaniards and the Indians and anything with brown eyes. Then they got out of there, went elsewhere. When they came back, the same thing happened around over there.

ST Where did they go?

Ek Maybe down to Monterey, down to Santa Cruz, down through there to the missions. Then they came back, and ____ told them, "Wherever you see a grapevine growing or a fig tree and a fruit tree ____ growing side by side, make your home. There were no ferryboats at that time, so I don't know how they got over into the Oakland side, but

earthquake
was 1868
Oct 21st —

they seen the land was good. (So they got their): ?
So Zimmerman, he came over, got some property — put their money in and they got a few acres. They started a garden, and they started to prosper. And they went, and went, and went, and all the land was vacant, and they grew vegetables galore. They supplied the city of Oakland — the ships and stuff. That was at the foot of 13th Street, at 13th and Wood, which was Williams Street at that time. The men would row out and supply the ships, and then he would barter the vegetables and fruits and whatever was in season for various goods, and that was the way they started in. With the money they made they kept buying property. So then the railroads came in and knocked everything out, (the industries coming over their leads) and the Daltons had the (foundry) — the Dalton's foundry at the foot of 10th Street. Then the California (Door) moved in, and then the shoe factory at 16th and Wood Street. They all got together to back this fellow up to build a shoe factory ____ to employ whites. But he turned around and he got Chinese in there. At that time they had the settlers in Oakland, mostly Germans and the Dalmatians. They came off the ships — carpenters, painters, and various other ones. They got together, and he says, "Here, we're going to employ whites, locals," and the next night (chuckles), I don't know what happened, there happened to be a bon fire, and there went the building. (chuckles)

5-10 minutes Pacific [illegible] started 1865

50-100 people Novelty Works (?)

ST What was your grandfather's connection in this?

EK The oldtimers got together to build this shoe factory. The railroads came in, and boom, right out of your property. You didn't have a word to say. Like en in '60 '65

(?)

when the road was started, they had hired gunmen which would be strikebreakers or whatnot, to protect. If it wasn't for Father King at St. Mary's Church, they'da put the Southern Pacific fence on 12th Street all the way up. But Father King had the bell up there, and he'd ring this bell, and ring this bell, and whatever the people were doing would drop what they'd done — and they'd go down and go fight and push them back. That's what we had them ~~[illegible] enemies~~, but you fought them — a bunch of foreigners that just walked all over you. Battenfeld old Dutchmen and Germans (chuckles), they wouldn't take the Danes! They said, "Let's give it to 'em!"

ST Are these stories your grandfather and father told you?

EK These are stories my father told me.

EZ Our grandparents was all dead before I was born, so we never knew them personally.

ST How long was your grandfather at the garden?

EK We sold the last piece of the garden in 1949, 1950. Before that the land was vacant because when everything moved in, the 1934 strike and everything else, your picket fence wasn't worth nothin'. They'd just come in and clean your vegetables out. They'd help themselves. (: at night with a knife in the back — you couldn't do nothin' to 'em. The police couldn't watch 'em. You couldn't shoot 'em. You'd

be held for the damages. So after the oldtimers started to pass away, my uncles, the '34 strike came ~~down~~ on and that was it! So we cut down on the market, and my dad retired.

ST When the railroads came in your grandfather and his brothers still continued to garden, regardless?

EK Yes. The bay would come right up to the back of the kitchen. In fact ~~the~~ your bathroom hung over. On a windy day you couldn't use the bathroom! They came and just put fill from Wood Street to where the SP depot is. They used to have a trestle over there. They just took the flatcars (0-15 minutes / 100-160 counter) there just put lots, lots, lots, and cut off the land, and put the tracks on ~~that~~ dock. They kept going, they kept going until they got to Pine Street. They cut off the foundry, they cut off everything right there. So, Dalton, my grandfather, Sledzeski, ~~Syrom~~, Syrom, Leopold, I don't know who the other ones were...

EK Syrom, Leopold...

EK Well, when they got together they tried to fight the railroads. So little by little, that was it. Attorneys fees, court calls and whatnot — a little piece of property here and a little piece of property there, they shrunk it all down.

ST So your grandfather was working with a number of other people in this operation, in the garden.

EK He started with Zimmerman. Zimmerman turned out to be

a furniture manufacturer in S.F., and a Frenchman named of Kazo. Kazo got a little money, a little gold in his pocket and went back to France. So they put him out and kept on. Zimmerman prospered. So he told my grandfather, "You leave the garden, and come with me over to S.F. in the furniture business." Grandfather said, "Nothin' doing." He had enough with San Francisco. So he stood in the gardens, and they made some kind of a deal where he acquired the property.

ST This was about when?

EC Oh, that was in the late '60s.

ST Your grandfather's name was . . .

EZ Domingo. The three brothers was here - The brothers were Domingo, Jocamo was the second son, and Guiseppe was the third son. That's the one that went to South America. Grandpa was the first son that came here, then Jocamo came - that was Emma Crondona's father, and Guiseppe was a bachelor. He went to South America. Jocamo lived in S.F. all the time, and he worked with the tugboats that used to go out. I've forgotten the name of it. It was a big company that had tugboats, and he used to operate with them.

ST Your grandfather worked independently then?

EK: Oh, he was independent — never worked for nobody. My grandfather had the property. Then he had three sons which were my father Carl, my Uncle, & they called him "Whitey" but his name was Nicholas. My uncle Angelo was the youngest + they called him "Archie" — they wouldn't know him by the name of Angelo. Then he had ~~also~~ two daughters — Columbine Knocchio and Pauline ~~Schiavon~~ Sonino.

Joseph Grondona worked at Ghiarradelli chocolate factory — he was the engineer

Joseph Grondona was Eva's grandfather's brother (Guiseppe is "Joseph" in English).

15-20 minutes | 160-225 counter

Earthquake in late 1860s (1868) — grandfather was in Italy, had left property to Guiseppe — when Domingo came back, property was in bad shape — Guiseppe "scooted" to South America.

Domingo made several trips back and forth between Oakland and Italy — brought kids to Italy to be educated. Brought the family to Oakland one by one.

Brought his children back to Italy because there was no school in Oakland, and no church to teach them religion.

EZ: "There was nothing but Indians and Spaniards here at that time."

Eva: says closest church was Sacred Heart, the other church was in San Leandro — visiting priests who came by with horse and buggy — but that wasn't enough because the Grondona family was very religious

Grandmother came to America by herself (brought her 2 boys back)

Eva's father was born in 1863, was brought to Italy when he was 4 years old — came back when he was 12 years old.

Columbine was born in Italy

Lawrence DeLucci — Edward's grandfathers married two sisters; the Levagetti's

20-25 minutes | 225-300 counter

When grandfather came back, bought property where Idora Park was, on the Shattuck Street side and started a vegetable garden there, but that was way out of town, wasn't successful

grandmother Adelle died young - from gasoline lamp explosion (in the 40s)

(afterwards sold the property there (about 1896 or 1898) (was about 4-5 acres) was sold for $3,000.00

(dora Park took it over

original Crondona property stood - had "for sale" signs, but wasn't bought

When railroad came in, property on Wood Street was worth $100.00/foot

(Eva's husband collected a lot of the family documents, property deeds, etc. up to the Masonic Lodge to make a history, but they've never been seen since)

Eva born in 1898, their father had moved to Shellmound Park the previous year — they put in two crops — had winter in 1896

father & mother married in 1894
(only the father moved to Shellmound)

they had one good year at Shellmound, but then one year ('96?) they had too much rain — had to put boxes under the beds to elevate them in case of floods Of the bay

Then Mr. C.D. (?) bought Shellmound Park land from the; title — made a race track there — gave Mr. Grondona a good price for it.

25-30 minutes | 300-385 counts

With that money, they bought property in Alameda — at the foot of Pacific Avenue
— where the Alameda Air Station is, Mr. Grondona was on one side, Borax Smith was on the other.

Others who owned land there w/ Grondona:
Capernetto (?)
Cerazetto (?)
Stacconi (?) — came later

Archie (Domingo Grondona's brother) took care of the West Oakland property.

Also had 100 acres in San Pablo. (in 1906)
(Uncle White took care of that)

did vegetable gardening

EE: "The Grondona brothers — share and share alike."
(two of them were bachelors

Domingo was the only one who married and had a family.

(Edward Grondona is also a bachelor.)

The two bachelor brothers died within 11 months of each other.

In 1937 Mrs. Grondona, Archie & White all died.

Ek.: (About Archie): "He was just a worker. He worked before sunrise til after sunset."

- grew truck vegetables: carrots, turnips, beets, Swiss chard beets

had the Free Market — started at 6th and Washington, then moved to 10th Street — kept it until Mr. Grondona died in 1941.

the Free Market:
Edward: "The market had a 100 or 105 stalls. We were stall #100, right as you came in — the entrance on Washington Street — the fist stand to your right."

30-32 minutes | 385-430 counter

6th Street Market owned by Eddie Rowan (?)

Jake Pantuscí built the 10th Street Market on Washington. —
Pantuscí gave the Grondonas the first preference, stall #1.
open on Wednesdays and Saturdays

Edward: "You had everything under one roof — four or five vegetable stands, 8 or 10 fruit and vegetable stands — everything. It was beautiful."

they won first prize at the 1915 fair for their exhibit of vegetables the Panama Pacific Exhibition

Next time people from Stockton won it (for publicity - they sold, or gave land in exchange for winning the exhibit — politics)

Archie worked at the Free Market til 1937 when he died.

Begin Side Two

5 minutes | 0-50 Counter